Reconnections@Findhorn: Values-driven leadership for transformational change

An inspiring programme delivered in partnership between Forum for the Future and the Findhorn Foundation

26 – 30 April 2015, Findhorn Ecovillage (near Inverness, Scotland).

EVENT FACILITATORS

Jonathon Porritt
Forum for the Future, Founder Director and Trustee

Kate Rawles
Outdoor Philosopher, writer and activist

Kosha Joubert
Global Ecovillage Network, President

Robin Alfred
Findhorn Consultancy Service, Founding Director
This programme starts from two shared assumptions: that the need to forge solutions for our multiple, interlocking environmental and social challenges is an urgent and compelling priority; and that today’s incremental, piecemeal change is not enough. Achieving sustainability requires transformational change, at many levels.

With a focus on the environmental dimensions of sustainability, we ask what this means for businesses and not-for-profit organisations. What constitutes effective action? What values should drive these changes? And what does effective, transformational, values-led leadership really entail in the profoundly challenging situation we find ourselves in now?

Set in the world-renowned Findhorn ecovillage community, and building on the great success of Reconnections@Findhorn 2014, R@F 2015 will tackle these questions head on.

Our aims:

1. To revisit, re-ignite and sustain our own energy, passion, values, focus and capacity for leadership;
2. To work together to figure out how best to bring about the changes we need;
3. To take time to reflect, debate and network with other like-minded people;
4. To reconnect with nature, and our own sense of inspiration.

“Excellent content, masterful facilitation, intellectual rigour, and the chance to dig deep on values and purpose…”
Sarah Severn, Senior Director, Systems Innovation, Nike

“I immediately recommended this as a management training option for Schroders.”
Rick Stathers, Head of Responsible Investment, Schroders
The R@F experience aims to both challenge and inspire, ensuring all participants have the opportunity to stand back from the normal pressures of life to ask big picture questions, debate solutions, and have the time and space to reconnect with nature, each other and the deeper rivers of life. This is achieved over five days in the inspirational Findhorn Foundation and Community with equally inspirational people.

The programme will include reflections from Jonathon Porritt on ‘the state of sustainability’ today; facilitation and Mythodrama from Robin Alfred; insights from Kate Rawles on biodiversity, values and valuing Nature; and international perspectives from Kosha Joubert. Participants will also enjoy experiential outdoor sessions in and around the powerful Findhorn land and seascapes.

Key questions will include:
- What does values-driven leadership mean at this time of planetary emergency and how do we embody it?
- What values do we need to adopt in ourselves, in our organisations and economic systems?
- How do we catalyse and support lasting, transformational change to the systems and organisations we are part of?
- What does ‘respect for nature’ really mean when it is translated into organisational practice?
- How can our lives be the fullest, and most coherent, expression of the meaning and purpose that the world needs now?

The ideal outcomes? A deeper understanding of where we are; a strengthened motivation to help lead the transition to somewhere much, much better; some powerful insights into how to influence transformation within (and beyond) our own organisations; and an enhanced network of influential, cross-sectoral leaders grappling with these unique, contemporary challenges.

“Words cannot do justice to the experience. It was magnificent.”
Kelly Clark, Director, Tellus Mater Foundation

“Reconnections@Findhorn was a life changing experience.”
Steve Waygood, Chief Responsible Investment Officer, Aviva Investors
The team

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Jonathon Porritt is an eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator on sustainable development. He is also a Non-Executive Director of Willmott Dixon Holdings, is a Trustee of the Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy, and is involved in the work of many NGOs and charities as Patron, Chair or Special Adviser.

He was formerly Director of Friends of the Earth (1984-90); co-chair of the Green Party (1980-83) of which he is still a member; Chairman of UNED-UK (1993-96); a Trustee of WWF UK (1991-2005), a member of the Board of the South West Regional Development Agency (1999-2008), and Chairman of the UK Sustainable Development Commission (2000-2009). Jonathon was installed as the Chancellor of Keele University in February 2012.

After many good years lecturing on environmental philosophy at Lancaster University, and ‘big picture’ environmental issues, environmental education and sustainability at the University of Cumbria, Kate Rawles has recently left the university system to work freelance and focus on her next environmental communication cycling adventure. She was the academic director of the original Reconnections programme and runs regular ‘Outdoor Philosophy’ courses, a mix of retreat, brainstorm and reconnection with nature for computer-tied environmentalists.

Her other freelance work includes teaching ethics, values and sustainability for Forum for the Future, the University of Surrey and Cumbria’s Institute for Leadership and Sustainability (IFLAS). In 2006 she cycled from Texas to Alaska following the spine of the Rockies, chatting to North Americans about climate change. She has since given ‘Carbon Cycle’ talks to many diverse audiences. The Carbon Cycle; Crossing the Great Divide was shortlisted for the Banff Mountain Festival adventure travel award and was a runner up in the People’s Book Prize. Her next trip, ‘The Life Cycle’, will be in the South American Andes, and focussed on biodiversity. Kate is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, an active member of the Adventure and Environmental Awareness Group and sits on the Food Ethics Council.

Kosha is an international facilitator, trainer, manager and consultant. She has worked extensively in the fields of curriculum development, international collaboration and sustainable development. Kosha currently serves as President of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN-International), while simultaneously holding the position of Executive Director of GEN-Europe, the European branch of GEN-International. She has been the driving force behind the emergence of GEN-Africa as an independent region within GEN.

Kosha is a co-founder of Gaia Education, which develops trainings at the cutting-edge of sustainability and co-author of the internationally applied Gaia Education curriculum, the Ecovillage Design Education, the development of which was endorsed by UNITAR and recognised as an official contribution to the UN ‘Decade for the Education for Sustainable Development 2004-2014’. She is currently working on the translation of her book, previously published in German: The Change Makers Guide to Collective Wisdom.

Robin’s passion is facilitating extraordinary events and the use of Mythodrama to develop depth and authenticity in leadership. Prior to coming to the Findhorn Foundation in 1996, Robin coached groups and individuals in a wide variety of settings in the corporate, public and voluntary sectors. At Findhorn he founded the Findhorn Consultancy Service in 1999, whose clients include PwC, BP, Standard Life, NHS, Tasweeq (Qatar). He also works as a Lead Presenter and Associate of Olivier Mythodrama with some of the world’s largest and most influential corporations and Business Schools (Microsoft, Macdonalds, Daimler, Motorola, Nokia, Oxford Said Business School, INSEAD).

Robin facilitated the March 2011 Glen House meeting of all climate investor groups worldwide and Christiana Figueres of the UNFCCC. Robin is a registered facilitator for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and designed and facilitated parts of the 2013 UN Global Compact summit in New York.
Established in 1996, Forum for the Future is now the UK’s leading sustainable development charity, with 70 staff and over 100 partner organisations including some of the world’s leading companies. Forum for the Future works with business and government to inspire new thinking, build creative partnerships and develop practical solutions. They also share what they have learned so that others can benefit – and act. Working with pioneering partners, this organisation transforms the essential systems of food and energy to secure a more fulfilling life for us and future generations.

Over the past 15 years, Forum for the Future has succeeded in changing the debate about sustainable business by highlighting the opportunities sustainability offers, and has been instrumental in altering the way leading companies operate. It has trained thousands of leaders through its master classes and Masters Programme, equipping graduates to face global challenges such as climate change and shortages of vital resources, and promoted long-term thinking and positive visions of tomorrow with businesses, government and NGOs, through its ground-breaking futures and scenarios work. It has also sparked the innovation of new products, services and business models that will make our world more sustainable.

The Findhorn Foundation and Community is over fifty years old and is a growing ecovillage of around 600 people. The Findhorn Foundation is a living experiment and centre of demonstration and learning for the notion of non-monetary, low carbon abundance. This world-renowned community has no ideology other than to foster the highest in human potential, co-creating with the rest of the natural world, and taking inspired action. Its programmes address both the externals of sustainability and the importance of the inner life of human beings in their search for meaning and purpose.

It is a United Nations NGO, the birthplace and home of seminars and trainings for CIFAL Scotland (part of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research), and has UN Habitat Best Practice designation.
What participants say

“We all get so busy in our professional lives. The opportunities to take time out to reflect and re-energise are far too rare. The few days at Findhorn allowed me to do this and more. What proved really special was the group of people attending from a wide range of sectors, including a small cluster all working in and around sustainable finance. This allowed us to have some really rich but focused conversations, and generated some great actions to take forward.”

Emma Howard Boyd, Director, Stewardship, Jupiter Asset Management

“My recent experience of Reconnections@Findhorn came at a perfect time to prepare me for a major life shift - the imminent birth of twins! The reason why we’re doing our work felt so poignant to me within this generational context. Our four facilitators were brave, honest and open participants, ‘servant leaders’ leading by example – with greatly differing styles! I left feeling inspired and reaffirmed in my professional goals. Words cannot do justice to the experience. It was magnificent. If you have the option to go, do it! And if you have friends and colleagues who you know would benefit, encourage them to join as well!”

Kelly Clark, Director, Tellus Mater Foundation

“Reconnections@Findhorn was a fantastic opportunity to meet like-minded individuals from organisations that really want to make a difference. I’d highly recommend it!”

David Goult, Development Construction Manager, John Lewis Partnership

“The structure of Reconnections@Findhorn enabled us to explore, in depth, our hopes and fears, to exchange ideas and create a forum for open, inspirational and innovative discussion. I came away with valuable new connections and a wealth of ideas. I immediately recommended this as a management training option for Schroders and would recommend it to individuals and organisations seeking inspiration for personal objectives and long term strategy.”

Rick Stathers, Head of Responsible Investment, Schroders

“Reconnections@Findhorn was a life changing experience. The opportunity to reflect deeply on the issues, to consider the scale of what is at stake, and to resolve how we can work better together to build a more sustainable future was priceless. I recommend it to anyone working in sustainability, and particularly to those of us needing to invest in our own resilience from time to time.”

Steve Waygood, Chief Responsible Investment Officer, Aviva Investors

For more information and full endorsements please visit www.forumforthefuture.org/project/reconnectionsfindhorn/overview

“Reconnections@Findhorn offers an opportunity to step back from the buzzing whirl of daily life, get away from our usual physical and social surroundings, and put on hold the constant pressure to Get Stuff Done. How do I make the best and highest use of my particular talents, knowledge and skills, my power, organizational resources and social network? What do I want my life to be about, and what legacy will I leave? Reconnections@Findhorn provided a bit of sustained time and spiritual space in which to remind ourselves of what ‘good’ looks like, what it feels like, and how we can take that vision of goodness out into the world and embed it in our work. It was full of great conversations, poetry, sea views, and insights that changed my life – at least I’m sure they will, if I can just keep reminding myself of what they were!”

Marshall Clemens, Founder and Principal, Idiagram

“I knew from the moment that the invitation arrived in my inbox that this retreat was going to be exceptional - and I wasn’t disappointed. Excellent content, masterful facilitation, intellectual rigour, and the chance to dig deep on values and purpose combined to make a fun and rewarding five days. The benefits will be long-lasting, and the friendships and connections should last a lifetime.”

Sarah Severn, Senior Director, Systems Innovation, Nike
Logistics

**Dates:** 26 – 30 April 2015.

**Times:** Start Sunday at 12.30pm, end Thursday 12.30pm.

**Location:** Findhorn Foundation, The Park Ecovillage, Findhorn, Scotland, IV36 3TZ.

**Cost:** £1,750 (excluding travel costs).

**Included:** Four nights’ accommodation, (Sunday – Wednesday), all meals from Sunday to Thursday (vegetarian, local organic where possible), all programme content and materials.

**Travel:** There is a sleeper train from London and there are regular flights to Inverness. Delegates are encouraged to arrive on Saturday, taking time to ‘change gear’ and settle in before the course starts.

**Additional information:**
Bed and Breakfast accommodation, at very reasonable cost, can be arranged for any delegates who wish to arrive on Saturday or extend their stay (subject to availability after the event).

Findhorn is a strikingly beautiful place with accommodation in charming community facilities. Small groups of delegates share thoughtfully designed residences that include kitchen and comfortable lounge areas. All bedrooms are single occupancy. Some bathrooms and toilets are shared, but this co-location does give you the opportunity to have breakfast ‘at home’ with other participants.
We look forward to engaging with you in shaping a truly sustainable world.